

Teijin Aramid: Making Sure Middle and Senior Managers are Ready to Move into Top Management Roles and Lead the Company in the Future

How Management Centre Europe and Teijin Aramid Worked to Achieve Growth and an Increased Market Share Even in Difficult Economic Times

Teijin Aramid is the leader in the world of aramids [man-made high-performance fibres]. With four different aramids in a variety of formats, Teijin Aramid offers its customers not only the greatest range of product properties, but also an unrivalled level of knowledge and experience when it comes to innovative product development.

Why did Teijin Aramid Contact Management Centre Europe?

Teijin Aramid had a strong position in their market. Their sales and market share were growing year on year. But, in order to maintain this growth and market share, the President & CEO of Teijin Aramid, Eiso Alberda van Ekenstein, and the top management team at Teijin Aramid realized they needed to make sure that they continued to have the right people with the right skills and behaviours in place for the future. They recognized that there was a gap in skills and experience between the current top team and the middle and senior managers who would take on the top roles in the future. And they wanted to bridge that gap.

Teijin Aramid needed a solution that would prepare these middle and senior managers for future top leadership roles. The solution would also need to focus on the commercial aspects of Teijin Aramid's business as well as incorporating the right leadership skills and behaviours to lead the company.

Teijin Aramid wanted to work with MCE because they knew that MCE could deliver management development that would take into account the business situation of Teijin Aramid itself, and not just rely on standard best practices.



High performance aramids are used in protective clothing

MCE's Associates are business people and bring real life examples and cases to their workshops.

The MCE Associates and team chosen to lead this project had the right international business know-how and experience gained with major global organizations.

How did Management Centre Europe work With Teijin Aramid?

Understanding the situation at Teijin Aramid

Discussions took place between MCE and Eiso Alberda van Ekenstein, President & CEO, and other stakeholders. MCE wanted to know more about the organization itself, how it worked, and its strategy. MCE wanted to know about the processes and procedures in place, and the people issues related to implementing

the company's strategy. All of this would help MCE put together the right solution with Teijin Aramid.

Analyzing the situation at Teijin Aramid

Teijin Aramid had just concluded a new 10-year strategic plan and they needed their people to deliver this.

To find out more MCE analysed the needs of the business. This involved:

- one-to-one interviews with all of the top management team
- analysis of feedback from a highly reputable consultancy
- and for more personal data, analysis of employee satisfaction data and 360 degree assessments

A leadership framework was then developed using an existing Teijin Aramid competency framework. Four areas of



Eiso Alberda van Ekenstein, President & CEO Teijin Aramid

“Working with Management Centre Europe has really helped prepare our people for future top leadership roles. We are also really impressed with the way MCE reacted so quickly to the current downturn and adapted the programme to deal with this.”

Eiso Alberda van Ekenstein, President & CEO , Teijin Aramid

leadership were clearly identified as the foundation stones for the 360° leadership development tool for Teijin Aramid:

- 1) Setting the direction
- 2) Sharing the goals
- 3) Gaining support
- 4) Delivering success

Deciding on the right Customer Specific Solution for Teijin Aramid

The MCE proposal was presented to CEO of Teijin Aramid in Spring 2008. Teijin Aramid agreed to three years of management development that would involve four different groups of middle and senior managers.

The programme would have the following objectives:

- To develop and retain future leaders to achieve the company's goals
- Increase leadership skills to implement the necessary changes
- Influence a shared and common understanding of what it takes to be a successful leader at Teijin Aramid

- Learn from other companies' experiences
- Understand their own strategy and commit to support its development and execution
- Create a group of individuals who can and will 'gain momentum' to fill key positions in the future
- Gain commitment to individual career and leadership self-development plans

Approximately 60 middle and senior managers would participate in four separate groups (and each group would take part in four separate workshops) to complete the leadership development.

Two members of the top management team would participate in every workshop. They would also act as coaches to their group.

Development and implementation Of the Solution for Teijin Aramid

The four separate workshops of the programme had two key elements:

- Leadership skills
- Commercial day-to-day operational skills

Focus on these two key elements would help Teijin Aramid to achieve the short and long- term growth targets required by the company.

The workshops covered the following topics:

- Teijin Aramid's definition of leadership
- Giving clear strategic direction – what does this mean to this group of leaders?
- Practising and communicating Teijin Aramid's strategy
- Identifying the personal behavioural change required to deliver future corporate goals
- Aligning the values and behaviours of the company to the strategic direction
- Testing and aligning the voice of the customer to the strategic plan and the day-to-day running of the business
- Exploring how far innovation will play a key part in delivering future goals
- Understanding and practising the specific skills of coaching and feedback
- Cascading the strategy to the lower levels of Teijin Aramid
- Personal development and career planning

The workshops included guest speakers who were brought in to speak on specialist subjects. The two members of the top management team who participated in the workshops also acted as coaches to the group. This coaching took place before, during and after each workshop.

As every group had different priorities, the Associates adapted the content according to the needs of the business and personal development challenges.

Teijin Aramid wanted to work with MCE because they knew that MCE could deliver management development that would take into account the business situation of Teijin Aramid itself, and not just rely on standard best practices. MCE's Associates are business people and bring real life examples and cases to their workshops.

Changing Circumstances – Managing through a Crisis

At the end of 2008 the world economy changed. In these new circumstances Teijin Aramid not only required leadership skills for the long-term but they were now faced with short-term challenges the like of which they had never seen before.

Three of the four workshops for the first group of middle and senior managers had taken place. Now however the balance of the programme had to shift. The focus had been on company growth and personal development; the new focus had to take into account short-term cash-flow issues.

In consultation with the two top managers who were participating in the programme, namely Mr. Gert Frederiks Global Director Marketing and Sales, and Mr. Wessel Bruining Manufacturing Director, the MCE Associates worked on redeveloping the content. They did this for the fourth workshop, and also planned it in for the workshops to come.

As a result, the topics on the final workshop included:

- Managing through crisis
- Group action planning in the short-term
- A group presentation on recommendations for both the short and the long term to the top management team.

Topics such as personal development and career planning were still included despite the change in circumstances.

However, it was not enough just to stop there - this thinking and approach had to be carried forward into the next group.

Balancing the current crisis with future goals

The original leadership objectives that were established at the beginning of the programme still stand to this day. But now the improvement in leadership skills has to have a different focus for both short and long-term growth. This was reflected in the first delivery of workshop one to the second group. This workshop focused on the recommendations established by the previous group and then translated some of these recommendations into action points, strategic goals and milestones for Teijin Aramid.

Results and Benefits for Teijin Aramid

The first group of middle and senior managers at Teijin Aramid who took part in the leadership development included group heads, business and site managers. These people now:

- Understand what kind of leadership is needed at Teijin Aramid
- Have taken on increased ownership and commitment in order to balance long-term objectives with the tough current economic situation
- Have increased efforts to be more customer-focused
- Have improved innovation processes not just in product but throughout the business
- Are experimenting on changing their own behaviours to achieve corporate goals

As mentioned previously, the second group of middle and senior managers are now taking part in the programme. Two more groups will follow.

About Teijin Aramid

Teijin Aramid is an international company that supplies customers throughout the world with the high-performance aramids Twaron®, Technora® and Teijinconex®, available as yarn, fiber and pulp, and the aramid-based rubber ingredient Sulfron®. Production sites are in the Netherlands and Japan. The aramid fibers from Teijin Aramid play a key role wherever strength, safety, durability and low weight are required – for example, in the automotive industry (tires, hoses, seat belts), in aerospace, civil engineering, leisure goods (e.g. boats), protective clothing (bullet, fire and cut-resistant clothing), optical fiber cables, friction materials and more. To service these global markets, Teijin Aramid has worldwide sales and marketing offices and agents. Teijin Aramid aims to constantly improve its products, explore new areas of application and support customers with new product development. For more information, see

www.teijinaramid.com

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Hulls and sails can be reinforced with high performance aramids